# Worms: Why Are They Slimy and Other Facts

* A worm has no eyes, legs or arms.
* There are 2700 different types of earthworms in the world.
* There can be up to 1 MILLION earthworms in just 1 acre of land.
* Worms help plants by mixing the soil. So gardeners love them because they are ‘free’ help!
* The sticky slime a worm makes helps keep it from drying out. If the worm dries out, it will die, because it ‘breathes’ through it’s skin.
* Earthworms can replace lost parts. Some types are better at this than others.
* Baby worms hatch from a cocoon. You can read about the [life cycle here](http://www.worm-farming.com/worm-life-cycle.html).
* A single worm has both male and female parts. This is called a ‘hermaphrodite.’ But they still need a mate to reproduce.
* Even without eyes, a worm can still sense light and will move away from it.
* Earthworms come to the surface when it rains because they need oxygen to breathe, and they would drown if they stayed in the soil.
* Some of the largest worms can live to be 50 years old.
* Regular earthworm can live 15 years.
* Worms use a gizzard to grind up food instead of teeth.
* A worm chopped in half will not become 2 worms. Just the head end will regenerate into a new worm.
* Worms can have up to 5 hearts depending on the type of worm it is.

### **Worm Bio**

Worms are hermaphrodites (both sexes on the same worm) but require another worm to mate with.  They lay eggs in a cocoon which hatches into the soil in 3 weeks.  Each capsule contains 3-5 baby worms (sometimes more).  
Respiration occurs through the moist membrane (skin) which is another reason why the environment for the worm should be damp.

**WORM FACTS**

* There are around 200 species of worm in NZ.  However, only about 10 species are valuable to agriculture.
* Worms mature in 60-90 days.
* Worms can live up to 15 years.
* Worms mate every 7-10 days.
* A mature worm can produce over 1,200 young each year.
* Worms ingest and excrete their weight once a day.
* Worms have 5 contractile hearts

